

# Special Message from the Chief of Naval Operations

## Task Force Navy Family

Hurricane Katrina directly impacted an estimated 18,000 Navy families. In fact, many of the Sailors providing relief to local citizens are in need of relief themselves. Most have lost something; some have lost everything.

Throughout the crisis, even as our efforts to support the joint task force ramped up, we never lost sight of our responsibility to help Navy families get back on their feet. The Navy Personnel Command rapidly stood up an emergency call center in Millington, Tenn., to foster communications and answer questions. The number is 1-877-414-5358, and it is still active.

Naval Installations Command established community support centers at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, NAS Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Naval Station Pascagoula and Construction Battalion Center Gulfport to provide a broad range of services, including crisis intervention and spiritual counseling, housing referral, legal assistance and even basic medical care.

The Navy-Marine Corps relief society has already processed more than 4,000 cases, distributing over \$1.5 million in disaster assistance funds. TRICARE dispatched additional staff to a large number of evacuee sites to provide face-to-face counseling for Katrina beneficiaries.

These are great efforts — necessary efforts — and they will continue. But we need to better organize and coordinate them. We need long-term solutions. That's why I ordered the establishment of Task Force Navy Family (TFNF). Led by Rear Adm. Bob Passmore, TFNF will conduct full spectrum community service operations to provide a rapid and coordinated return to a stable environment for our affected Navy family. That's the mission.

And when I say full spectrum, I mean it. As stipulated in naval message, CNO Washington DC 161133ZSEP2005, full spectrum community service operations will include but are not limited to: (1) Full accounting of affected Navy family members; (2) Availability of temporary housing; (3) Way ahead for permanent housing where authorized; (4) Financial assistance and counseling; (5) Return to school for children; (6) Transportation options for relocation, work and school; (7) Access to health care services; (8) Access to pastoral and family counseling services; (9) Access to child care; (10) Access to legal services, including claims support; and (11) Employment support.

Just to be clear, the Navy family consists of: Navy service members (active and Reserve, other service members assigned to Navy commands or tenants on Navy installations pending concurrence of their respective services) and their families; Navy retirees and their families; civilian employees of the Department of the Navy (DON) and their families; and may include certain extended family members (defined as parents, parents-in-law,

guardians, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law) of deceased, injured or missing Navy service members, Navy retirees or DON civilians within the joint operations area (JOA); family members in the JOA of Navy service members and civilians.

Rear Adm. Passmore is reporting directly to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and will be supported by two deputies, Rear Adm. Robert Reilly (*military personnel issues*) and Ms. Debra Edmond (*civilian personnel issues*). He will coordinate his efforts closely with other governmental and non-governmental agencies as appropriate, to include JTF Katrina, applicable Office of the Secretary of Defense, Navy Secretariat and Office of the Chief of Naval Operations staff, Department of Veterans Affairs, American Red Cross and the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, just to name a few.

I want the net cast wide, and I want it hauled in often. There are people hurting out there — our people and their loved ones — and we will do all we can to alleviate their pain. I liken it to a man overboard. You shift the rudder over, go to flank speed, and pluck the Sailor out of the water. In my view, we've got nearly 45,000 people in the water right now, and we're going to pick them up.

We will need your help to do it. Whether you know someone hit hard by Katrina or not, please reach out. Give of your time and your talent to one of the many volunteer organizations contributing to the relief effort. Check on a friend. Check on a stranger. Get involved and stay involved. From this day forward, every person serving our Navy not directly impacted by the hurricane should consider themselves ADDU to TFNF. You are key members of the team.

The Navy is doing great work on the Gulf Coast. I've seen it firsthand and couldn't be more proud of the contributions we've made. But nothing we do, no matter how badly needed or sincerely appreciated it might be, is more important than caring for those who make those contributions possible in the first place.

Hurricane Katrina devastated cities and towns. It took lives. By damaging our bases in that region, it even chipped away at some of our combat capability. But it did not destroy the human spirit. It did not destroy the Navy family. No storm can wipe that out. We will stand by the Navy family as the Navy family has stood by us.

I know I can rely on your support.

Adm. Mike Mullen  
Chief of Naval Operations

*The CNO's message has been edited from NAVADMIN 236/05 CNO Washington DC 192346Z SEP 05.*

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